

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 03912 271224Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ACDA-07 CU-02 IO-13 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 BIB-01 TRSE-00
/083 W

-----271235Z 079431 /42

P R 261118Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3507
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USNATO 1355
AMCONGEN MUNICH PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 3912

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CSCE, SHUM, PINT, RO
SUBJECT: ROMANIAN DISSIDENTS: BAPTISTS
REF: BUCHAREST 3158; 3400

SUMMARY: EMBOFF DISCUSSED CURRENT SITUATION OF BAPTIST
DISSIDENTS WITH BAPTIST PASTOR PAVEL NICOLESCU MAY 27.
NICOLESCU HAS NOT BEEN CALLED TO SECURITATE OFFICE IN
PAST TWO WEEKS AND, TO HIS KNOWLEDGE, NO RELIGIOUS FIGURES
ARE CURRENTLY BEING DETAINED BY AUTHORITIES. ACCORDING
TO NICOLESCU, AUTHORITIES ARE NOW IN PROCESS OF DECIDING
WHETHER OR NOT DISSIDENT BAPTISTS SHOULD BE TRIED.
NICOLESCU BELIEVES THERE WILL BE NO TRIALS BECAUSE OF
IMPACT THESE WOULD HAVE ON WESTERN AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION.
INSTEAD HE FEELS THAT RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION WILL
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PAGE 02 BUCAR 03912 271224Z

NOW CONCENTRATE ON SUBTLER METHODS ,I.E., DENIAL
OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND HIGHER EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES TO BELIEVERS. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER HAD HOUR-LONG
DISCUSSION AT EMBASSY MAY 27 WITH LEADING BAPTIST
DISSIDENT PAVEL NICOLESCU. NICOLESCU VERIFIED PREVIOUS

EMBASSY REPORTING ON BAPTIST SITUATION, AS WELL AS PROVIDING FURTHER DETAILS, E.G., NONE OF SIX BAPTIST DISSIDENTS PICKED UP APRIL 3 AND 4 WERE EVER HELD OVER-NIGHT BY SECURITATE., TECHNICALLY, THEY WERE NEVER THEREFORE "ARRESTED". DURING FIRST WEEK THEY WERE INTERROGATED SEPARATELY FOR AN AVERAGE OF ELEVEN HOURS EACH DAY, THEN RELEASED TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. PERIOD OF INTERROGATION GRADUALLY DECREASED OVER THE WEEKS AND NICOLESCU HIMSELF HAS NOT BEEN RECALLED IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS. ALL WERE BEATEN ON OCCASION. E.G. NICOLESCU ESTIMATES HE RECEIVED TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 25 BLOWS TO THE HEAD, STOMACH AND NECK UPON TWO OCCASIONS (APRIL 6 AND 12). HE NOW APPEARS IN EXCELLENT HEALTH.

3. NICOLESCU BELIEVES THAT AUTHROITIES ARE NOW IN PROCESS OF DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO TRY THEM. AS INDICATED IN BUCHAREST 2803, IF TRIED THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE CHARGED WITH VIOLATING PENAL CODE PRIVISIONS 157 AND 167 DEALING WITH TRANSMISSION OF IMPORTANT STATE DOCUMENTS TO FOREIGNERS AND TREASON. DURING INTERROGATION, BAPTISTS WERE ASKED TO ADMIT CONNECTIONS WITH FOREIGN ESPIONAGE ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE CIA, AS WELL AS PROVIDING MATERIAL TO THE "LEGIONARIES" AT RFE. NICOLESCU DOES NOT BELIEVE TRIALS WILL TAKE PLACE BECAUSE OF EFFECT THIS WOULD HAVE ON INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION. NICOLESCU PERSONALLY BELIEVES THAT DECISION OF ROMANIAN AUTHORTIES TO DETAIN AND INTERROGATE BAPTISTS WAS A MISTAKE, ON THEIR PART. HE CLAIMS THAT AS A RESULT, THEY RECEIVED CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BUCAR 03912 271224Z

MUCH INTERNAL SUPPORT FROM LOCAL BAPTIST COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS HAVING THEIR CASE PUBLICIZED INTERNATIONALLY. HE BELIEVES THAT ROMANIAN AUTHROTIES WILL NOW MAKE MORE EXTENSIVE USE OF MORE SUBTLE METHODS OF PERSECUTION SUCH AS DENIAL OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO BELIEVERS.

4. BAPTIST DISSIDENT LEADER IOSIF TON IS NOW IN CLUJ WHERE HE HAS A HOME, BUT HE AND THE OTHERS STILL TRAVEL AROUND THE COUNTRY PREACHING. NICOLESCU SAID THAT HE KNOWS OF NO BAPTIST OR OTHER RELIGIOUS FIGURE WHO IS CURRENTLY BEING DETAINED BY THE AUTHORITIES.

5. ACTION: AMCONGEN MUNICH: NICOLESCU TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE HOPED THAT ANY FUTURE RFE BROADCAST OF BAPTIST DISSIDENT MATERIAL WOULD BE DONE, FOR THE TIME BEING, WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION, E.G. HE BELIEVED THAT RFE MAY SHORTLY BE BROADCASTING TON'S "CALL TO TRUTH" DOCUMENT AND HOPED IT WOULD

NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO HIM, BUT RATHER ONLY BROADCAST AS
A NEWS OR INFORMATION ITEM.

6. COMMENT: NICOLESCU MAINTAINED THAT HE WAS MORE
OPTIMISTIC ABOUT FUTURE NOW THENA BEFORE HIS DETEN-
TION, NOTING THAT HE AND TON AND THE OTHER BAPTISTS
WERE NEVER ISOLATED FROM THEIR FELLOW BAPTISTS, AS
GOMA HAS APPARENTLY BEEN ISOLATED FROM ROMANIAN
INTELLECTUALS. HE CLEARLY APPEARED DETERMINED TO
CARRY ON OPENLY HIS CHALLENGE TO THE AUTHORITIES,
AS HIS VISIT TO THE EMBASSY AMPLY DEMONSTRATED.
BARNES

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